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Regional and subregional inputs

Regional and subregional inputs

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

Regional and subregional involvement in forest-related activities has been growing progressively and is reflected in an increasing number of unique and diverse initiatives among regions. While many priorities and challenges in sustainable forest management are commonly shared, the individual nature of forests, and specific economic circumstances and political will, within each regional and subregional entity,[a] strongly influence the manner in which those entities interact with the United Nations Forum on Forests and address sustainable forest management.

The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 2006/49, had decided to strengthen the Forum's interaction with regional entities. Subsequently, the Forum, in its resolution 7/1 of 27 April 2007, had invited regional and subregional entities to submit their inputs on experiences, challenges and advancements in addressing the issues in the Forum's agenda, including regional cooperation (annex, sect. C). In response to this request, 29 inputs were received from regional and subregional entities, all of which are available on the Forum's website. The present report provides a summarized account of these inputs.

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The report is organized into three sections. Section I provides an overview of regional and subregional specificities and challenges, and examples of initiatives in support of the Forum. Section II summarizes regional experiences and activities, including lessons learned in implementation, with a specific focus on forests and climate change, reversing the loss of forest cover and preventing forest degradation, including in low forest cover countries, biodiversity conservation and means of implementation. Section III presents brief highlights of South-South cooperation and partnership activities and actions undertaken in preparing regional and subregional inputs to the eighth session of the Forum and draws attention to the impetus, which continues to be shared by many, to actively engage in and facilitate the implementation of the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests.

The report highlights the important role of sustainable forest management in a socio-economic context in various fields and the varying degrees of regional progress. Disparities in means of implementation have also been noted. In particular, mobilizing resources for sustainable forest management, improving measures to strengthen forest law enforcement and good governance and building initiatives for raising awareness, all perceived as important tools requiring further attention, are also discussed.

[a] Forest-related mechanism, institution, instrument, organization or process is referred to as an entity.

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I. Introduction

1. At its sixth session, in 2006, the United Nations Forum on Forests had recognized the need to strengthen interaction between the global forest policy dialogue and regional- and subregional-level organizations and processes. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 2006/49 of 28 July 2006 (para. 3), adopted four global objectives on forests and added three new principal functions to the international arrangement on forests (para. 2 (a)-(c)). By means of this resolution, the Council strengthened the arrangement through a new and focused approach, designed to enhance the contribution of forests to achieving the internationally agreed development goals, and emphasized the importance of political commitment for the implementation of sustainable forest management. One of the arrangement's new functions, as specified by the Council, was to strengthen interaction between the Forum and relevant regional and subregional forest-related mechanisms, institutions and instruments, organizations and processes,[1] with participation of major groups, as identified in Agenda 21,[2] and relevant stakeholders to facilitate enhanced cooperation and effective implementation of sustainable forest management, as well as to contribute to the work of the Forum (resolution 2006/49, para. 2 (c)).

2. At the Forum's seventh session, in 2007, Member States had reached agreement on the Forum's multi-year programme of work for the period 2007-2015 and on the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests (hereafter referred to as the forest instrument), reaffirming commitment to work at all levels to achieve progress towards the achievement of the global objectives by 2015. The forest instrument was subsequently adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 62/98 of 17 December 2007, as contained in the annex thereto, following more than a decade of numerous discussions on forest policy within the United Nations.

3. Building on the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests proposals for action and previous decisions of the United Nations Forum on Forests, the forest instrument sets out national policies and measures for achieving sustainable forest management. In addition, it further defines measures for international cooperation and means of implementation, six of which place considerable emphasis on regional action and cooperation. In particular, emphasis is placed on forest law enforcement, governance, capacity-building, and forestry research and development, as well as technical and scientific cooperation, including South-South and triangular cooperation. Therefore, successful implementation of the forest instrument is closely linked to building partnerships with all, including regional and subregional entities.

4. Given the growing regional emphasis, the Forum had decided to add a new common item on regional and subregional inputs to the agendas for its future sessions. Accordingly, regional and subregional forest-related entities were invited by the Forum to address the issues and agenda items planned for consideration at its eighth session and to submit a concise summary of their deliberations to the Forum secretariat. To facilitate the submission of inputs, the Forum secretariat had prepared

[1] Commonly referred to as entities.

[2] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992*, vol. I, *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex II.

an information note, which was recognized as a helpful aid by many entities. The present report summarizes the submissions received from 29 entities. Those entities are listed in Annex I. In some cases, owing to the fact that the launching of new activities or initiatives had occurred only recently, it was difficult for entities to provide, in such a relatively short time, detailed information on experience gained on the main issues.

5. Section I of this report provides an overview of regional specificities, challenges and relevant activities in support of the Forum's work. Section II presents an update of experiences related to issues to be considered at the Forum's eighth session, while focusing on political commitments, advancements, shortcomings of implementation and cross-sectoral activities. Section III briefly highlights instances of South-South cooperation and partnership activities and the actions taken in preparing inputs to the eighth session of the Forum. Activities performed at the regional level with several members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and non-governmental organizations are also noted. While the uniqueness of forest-related entities, including their composition and mandates, is important, it will not be the main focus of the report. A thorough description of each entity is available in the official inputs to be found on the Forum's website.[3]

A. Regional and subregional specificities and challenges

6. Forests are a vital component of sustainable development and contribute significantly to global, regional and national priorities, including issues to be addressed at the Forum's eighth session. They play an essential role in ensuring environmental sustainability, human well-being, security and socio-economic development.

7. Naturally, many forestry-related priorities and challenges are shared among regional entities. However, different ecological conditions and specific socio-economic circumstances, cultural ties and political will of countries strongly influence the priorities and operating modalities of each entity, as well as its interaction with the Forum. In the last two decades, for example, the forest sectors of most African countries have been increasingly marginalized, largely owing to ongoing political and economic reforms.

8. Mandated functions, priorities and other normative characteristics of regional and subregional entities vary considerably. Regional intergovernmental processes such as the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Central American Commission for Environment and Development, the Central African Forests Commission, the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA), for example, emerged from a formal political process. On the other hand, the African Forest Forum, the Asia Forest Partnership, the Congo Basin Forest Partnership and the Puembo Initiative emerged out of an open and informal approach, building on flexible programmes and partnerships with Governments, various organizations and diverse stakeholders. Long-standing technical expertise on forest issues is an important resource of regional entities. In

[3] http://www.un.org/esa/forests/reports-unff8.html#regions.

this regard, the six Regional Forestry Commissions of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) have deep-rooted knowledge of regional forest issues and a well-established approach to interacting with global processes. Those Commissions had been involved in sustainable forest management long before the United Nations Forum on Forests was established, while other entities, like the Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation (APFNet), have recently been established.

9. All inputs submitted to the Forum for consideration at its eighth session provide constructive examples of best practices and lessons learned. The thematic issues to be considered at the eighth session, comprising loss of forest cover, forest degradation, desertification, climate change and conservation or forest biodiversity, as well as the means of implementation, were given high priority in the work of regional and subregional entities. In some cases, issues were addressed together with specific interrelated priorities. The Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD), for instance, addressed the relationship between social migration and the pressures of desertification, forest degradation and climate change. It also mentioned the course of action taken through the implementation of its Great Green Wall programme. The impact of desertification and the rise of food insecurity on food production was covered by the West African Economic and Monetary Union. The Union's common enhancement policy for the environment is focusing on actions for addressing these and other challenges, including the decline of forest biodiversity and natural habitat destruction due to bush-meat hunting and overexploitation of wild flora and fauna. The links among severe drought, land degradation, soil erosion and poverty were presented by the Economic Cooperation Organization, which includes many low forest cover countries. In this regard, priorities to strengthen interaction with the Forum and advance implementation are closely linked with major efforts to achieve sustainable development and eradicate poverty.

10. An effective means of implementation was commonly mentioned as a necessary condition for implementing sustainable forest management, particularly at the national level. Concern was directed not only at the insufficiency of financial resources, of transfer of environmentally sound technologies and of capacity-building, but also towards weak governance and law enforcement measures, illegal forest activities, corruption, and limited forestry education and research. In this regard, the mobilization of resources at all levels, along with international cooperation and official development assistance (ODA), was considered an important means of assistance in addressing implementation-related challenges. Moreover, exploring the potential of a forest funding mechanism to assist in the implementation of the forest instrument was greatly welcomed by many developing countries and mentioned in some inputs.

11. Some entities reported on challenges in forest management, while others highlighted progress in implementation. For example, along with the joint regional strategy of the Central African Forests Commission and the Congo Basin Forest Partnership, there has been an increase of certified forest areas[4] in the Congo Basin, a 2007 comprehensive report on the state of the forests of the Congo Basin, systematic capacity-building of Commission institutions and several thematic

[4] There are currently 3 million hectares within the certification process and it is planned that 10 million will have been certified by 2010.

working groups related to important regional and international forest processes, including the United Nations Forum on Forests. In addition, several countries in the subregion are engaged in Voluntary Partnership Agreement negotiations with the European Union (EU) and are focusing on activities related to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD).

12. Most of the responding entities have been active participants in the Forum process. In their reports, they mentioned their involvement in the Forum as well as in other multilateral forest-related forums, including the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora,[5] FAO, the Forest Law Enforcement and Governance processes, at the World Bank, the 2006 International Tropical Timber Agreement (TD/TIMBER.3/12), the Convention on Biological Diversity,[6] the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa,[7] and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.[8] Despite the presence of this broad participation, the mainstreaming of forest issues into national development agendas and programmes remains a major challenge. Efforts to mainstream the forest instrument into relevant regional agreements and programmes have also been weak. Efforts have been most feeble in subregions in which countries have been affected by conflict or are facing post-conflict situations. Hence, the expectation of greater effort by the Forum to take action in this regard was conveyed. The need for better coordination among forest-related national focal points and decision makers outside the forest sector was also stressed.

B. Regional and subregional initiatives in support of the work of the United Nations Forum on Forests

1. Contributions in support of the forest instrument

13. Several activities have been carried out by regional entities in support of the forest instrument. Since 2006, input papers proposing regional elements for the forest instrument have been submitted by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the African Group[9] and EU. In 2007, before the seventh session of the United Nations Forum on Forests, the Asia Forest Partnership, the African Forest Forum and the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization organized preparatory meetings for their members for the purpose of addressing key aspects of the instrument and the multi-year programme of work.

14. An analysis of the relevance of the forest instrument to the work of the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe was completed in 2008. Of the instrument's 60 operational paragraphs, 45 are fully relevant to the Ministerial Conference. In respect of those 45, the Ministerial Conference currently contributes to the implementation of 37 commitments through its ministerial declarations and resolutions.

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[5] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 993, No. 14537.

[6] Ibid., vol. 1760, No. 30619.

[7] Ibid., vol. 1954, No. 33480.

[8] Ibid., vol. 1771, No. 30822.

[9] In 2007, members of the African Forest Forum formed a group to facilitate negotiations in sessions of the United Nations Forum on Forests, called the African Group.

15. Other regional policy frameworks and strategies have dealt with substantive Forum-related matters and provisions of the forest instrument. Inputs to the Forum's eighth session, however, provide a first record of regional and subregional priorities, experiences and measures linked to the multi-year programme of work.

2. Accreditation

16. Since 2000, the Forum has granted observer status to 12 intergovernmental organizations.[10] Annex II provides a complete list of those organizations. The role of regional observer organizations in facilitating coordination and helping to develop common positions for negotiation is an important one for their members. In 2007 as a result of regional coordination, ASEAN established a Caucus on Forestry and members of the African Forest Forum formed a group to facilitate negotiations in the sessions of the United Nations Forum on Forests, called the African Group. The ASEAN Ad Hoc Experts Working Group on International Forest Policy Processes was established to promote implementation of international forest-related commitments and agreements in the region.

3. Regional and subregional initiatives

17. Interaction between the Forum and regional entities expanded significantly during the period 2000-2007. The introduction of regional panel events at Forum sessions and workshops showcasing experiences and realities of sustainable forest management helped to build a better understanding of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests proposals for action. Workshops focused on positioning negotiations for Forum sessions and developing a basis for cooperative work between countries and civil society. The African preparatory meeting in Gabon, organized by the Central African Forests Commission secretariat prior to the Forum's seventh session, is a relevant example, as it brought together African delegations, various stakeholders and several international and regional entities to discuss major global policy matters included in the Forum's agenda.

18. The important role of sustainable forest management in achieving the Millennium Development Goals was also demonstrated at Forum sessions. In this context, the analytical work undertaken by the five regional commissions carries significant weight. In particular, the inputs received from the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) referred to several projects and initiatives related to forests and forestry. Although the other three commissions have not provided input to the Forum's eighth session, the relevance of their work to forests and the Millennium Development Goal on ensuring environmental sustainability, as well as to other areas of regional and interregional cooperation, is worth noting.[11]

19. The Forum's regional interface generated further interest, and in 2008, the first-ever Region Led Initiative on Regional Input in Support of the United Nations Forum on Forests was organized by the Governments of Australia and Switzerland and held in Geneva from 28 to 30 January 2008. The Initiative discussed regional

[10] The Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1302, No. 21623) was granted observer status during the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests process.

[11] See the report of the Secretary-General on regional cooperation in the economic, social and related fields (E/2008/15 and Add.1) of 23 May 2008.

matters in preparation for the Forum's eighth session and offered participants an opportunity to share regional priorities, challenges, integration approaches and modalities of work, including inputs to the session. The secretariats of several regional and subregional entities participated and delivered presentations at the event. The summary report is available on the Forum's website.

20. Other regional forestry-related meetings took place in 2008. Several of these meetings considered only issues to be considered at the Forum's eighth session, while others explored specific regional priorities associated with global topics. In the pan-European context, the workshop on "Forests in the changing environment", held in Koli, Finland, from 3 to 5 September 2008 (see E/CN.18/2009/14), highlighted key priorities for the Forum's eighth session. Similarly, a Pacific preparatory workshop for the Forum's eighth session is planned for March 2009 by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, with the support of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ), to prepare for the participation of Pacific island countries and territories in the eighth session.

4. Criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management

21. Approximately 150 countries participate in one or more of nine ongoing regional processes on criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management. In the pan-European context, criteria and indicators provide guidance for developing policies and for assessing progress towards sustainable forest management. The pan-European region has a shared concept of sustainable forest management principles and practices, which are comprehensive and balanced,[12] covering various aspects of sustainable forest management. The concept has been further developed through the elaboration of many political commitments, resolutions and declarations. It has been incorporated into national and local law in European countries and accepted by many European organizations as a basis for their activities. In 1998, six criteria for sustainable forest management and a set of associated indicators were politically agreed.[13] Indicators were further improved and endorsed by ministers responsible for forests in 2003.[14] These have been used for information collection, analysis and reporting at the national and regional levels, and in the report entitled *State of Europe's Forests 2007: The MCPFE Report on Sustainable Forest Management in Europe*.[15]

22. The Montréal Process (Working Group on Criteria and Indicators for the Conservation and Sustainable Management of Temperate and Boreal Forests) was launched in 1994. Despite having only 12 member countries, this Process spreads across four different regions,[16] which account for 80 per cent of the world's temperate and boreal forests and 50 per cent of the world's forests. In 1995, at its

[12] See resolution H1 entitled "General guidelines for the sustainable management of forests in Europe", adopted at the Second Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe, 16 and 17 June 1993, Helsinki.

[13] See resolution L2 entitled "Pan-European criteria, indicators and operational-level guidelines for sustainable forest management", adopted at the Third Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe, 2-4 June 1998, Lisbon.

[14] See Vienna Living Forest Summit Declaration, adopted at the Fourth Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe, 28-30 April 2003, Vienna.

[15] Warsaw, Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe Liaison Unit Warsaw, 2007.

[16] Asia-Pacific, Latin America (MERCOSUR), North America and pan-European region.

sixth meeting, members adopted the Santiago Declaration which endorsed 7 criteria and 67 associated indicators for use as guidelines for policymakers in assessing national forest trends and progress towards sustainable forest management. In 2003, the Process developed and published the first Country Forest Reports using the agreed criteria and indicators. To enhance the relevance of the indicators to sustainable forest management and improve members' ability to report, the Process initiated a review process of indicators, and completed the revision by endorsing a set of 54 indicators at its nineteenth meeting, held in Moscow from 6 to 10 November 2008.

23. Other regional entities, such as the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization, the Community of Sahel-Saharan States and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, are also developing and using criteria and indicators to assess forest trends and regional progress. For example, when adopting the Vientiane Action Programme, ASEAN member States agreed to common criteria for sustainable forest management so as to eradicate unsustainable forest practices and strengthen ASEAN cooperation and joint approaches. To evaluate country efforts towards achieving the four global objectives on forest and their linkages to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, ASEAN developed and endorsed, in 2007, the ASEAN Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Management of Tropical Forests; the Monitoring, Assessment and Reporting Format for sustainable forest management; and Guidelines for the Implementation of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests proposals for action. With these tools, ASEAN plans to regularly update the Forum on progress made in the region.

5. National forest programmes

24. The national forest programme is one of the most important outcomes of the global forest policy dialogue. As the first commonly agreed framework for sustainable forest management applicable to all countries and to all types of forests, the national forest programme provides a framework through which to put international agreements on sustainable forest management into practice. The importance of national forest programmes for a wide range of approaches, including forest policy formulation, planning and implementation at the subnational and national levels, and for cross-sectoral coordination, was a shared view expressed in most inputs. Still, not all entities have been able to use national forest programmes as a means to achieve coherent implementation of forest-related international commitments subject to the United Nations Forum on Forests, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. Accordingly, improved coordination between national forest programmes, national adaptation programmes of action for climate change, national action programmes for combating desertification, and national biodiversity strategies and action plans was stressed. Integrating national forest programmes into poverty reduction strategies and national development plans was also emphasized, since the links could generate increased and sustained funding to forestry.

25. Several Regional Forestry Commissions have requested FAO to provide assistance to member countries in integrating national forest programmes into other national actions plans and development programmes. In this respect, FAO and the National Forest Programme Facility have been providing financial support to ASEAN members and several countries in Latin America and Africa. Although they

are at different stages of implementation, about two thirds of African countries have developed national forest programmes. Many African countries have also adopted new forest policies and laws, and geared efforts towards improving forest law enforcement. Through the non-legally binding instrument pilot project initiative, financial and technical support has been provided to African countries to assist them in building their capacities to reduce deforestation.

26. According to the input of ECA, several countries in Africa have developed national development plans for combating desertification. Countries have also integrated their national action programmes into national development plans, especially poverty reduction strategies, and, in some cases, have set up national desertification funds.

27. The importance of the forest sector for sustainable development of rural areas was also recognized. The EU Rural Development Regulations (2007-2013), which contain a set of forestry measures that member States can include in their rural development programmes, in line with their specific priorities and needs, constitute an appropriate example of this. Measures focus on enhancing the competitiveness of the EU forest sector and its diversification, as well as the protection and sustainable management of forests.

II. Substantive matters considered by the Forum

A. Forests and climate change

28. During the past several years, political commitments on climate change and goals to reverse the loss of forest cover from deforestation and forest degradation have greatly increased. The European Commission, for example, adopted several communications in 2007, on renewable energy, limiting global climate change and building a global alliance with developing countries. Through the Commission's Renewable Energy Road Map, EU recommends the establishment of a mandatory target of 20 per cent for renewable energy consumption in EU by 2020. In the ASEAN context, its 20 November 2007 Declaration on Environmental Sustainability emphasizes activities to be undertaken with the international community with a view to better understanding and adapting to the adverse impacts of climate change. In the Declaration, Heads of State and Government of ASEAN member countries agreed to work collectively towards increasing the cumulative forest cover of ASEAN by at least 10 million hectares by 2020, while in the Singapore Declaration on Climate Change, Energy and the Environment (21 November 2007), members of ASEAN and six other countries[17] committed to working collectively to increase the cumulative forest cover in the East Asia region by at least 15 million hectares by 2020. Despite their different targets, both political declarations expressed support for the achievement of the global objectives on forests.

29. On the subregional scale, the Land Resources Division of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community organized the Third Regional Meeting of Heads of Agriculture and Forestry Services (3-5 September 2008) and the Second Regional Conference of Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry (8 and 9 September 2008), out of which arose

[17] Japan, Republic of Korea, China, India, Australia and New Zealand.

an endorsement of climate change-related activities within the Division, as reflected in its strategic plan 2009-2012. SADC members have initiated policy and legislative reviews and national action plans and programmes to address challenges related to, among others, climate change, the loss of forest cover and land degradation, loss of biodiversity and the means of implementation of sustainable forest management. Furthermore, the subregion has developed the SADC Forestry Protocol (2002), which is the overarching policy framework for a collaboration among member States on forest development which also covers substantive matters addressed by the United Nations Forum on Forests. While stimulating regional coordination and implementation on forest matters, the Central American Commission for Environment and Development has promoted greater integration among its member States. The revised strategic programme on forests for the period 2008-2012, for example, provides a significant framework through which member countries can plan and carry out their regional priority activities. In the context of climate change, subregional plans are under way to harmonize strategies designed to develop and implement readiness plans in respect of reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD) and to create a monitoring, evaluation and regional certification mechanism.

30. Through its ministerial declarations and resolutions, the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe has continued to address urgent issues impacting forest conditions in Europe. Among the key commitments of the Fifth Ministerial Conference (Warsaw Conference), held in Warsaw from 5 to 7 November 2007, those related to climate change, water and forest fires stood out prominently. The forest instrument, the global objectives and the importance of regional cooperation were also reflected in the Warsaw Declaration, which was signed at the Conference. The need for greater complementarities among the Rio Conventions was also underlined. At the Sixth Ministerial Conference of the "Environment for Europe" process (Belgrade Conference), held in Belgrade from 10 to 12 October 2007, ministers for the environment recognized the interlinkages between biodiversity and climate change. The impacts on species, habitats, migratory patterns of species, and landscape were noted and the ministers committed to continue supporting the Pan-European Ecological Network.

31. Many regional priorities of sustainable forest management and climate change are aimed at providing strategic support to countries in the context of the development of a post-2012 climate regime. A Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe open-ended ad hoc working group on sustainability criteria for forest biomass production, including bioenergy, and guidelines for afforestation and reforestation, for example, constitute means of providing such support in the pan-European region. In other regions, capacity-building has been the key focus with regard to strengthening the position of countries so that they can participate more effectively in international climate negotiations. In this context, ECA has been working on establishing an African Climate Policy Centre to enhance countries' capacity to coordinate adaptation and mitigation investments.

32. Research has also contributed to addressing this topic. Research activities in the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe have been carried out mostly by the European Forest Institute. Its contributions include studies assessing the impacts of climate change on European forests and examining silvicultural response options. Recent studies focus on adaptation options and measures. ECE and FAO have also been addressing related issues encompassing the

estimation of supply and consumption of wood energy, wood resources balances and the role of harvested wood products in climate change policy, and plan to work further, with partners, to provide consistent data and policy messages on climate change. Not all regions, however, share this same research experience. Many inputs hint at a variability in awareness with respect to climate change-related issues. Most climate change-related topics are new to some countries, mainly in the Pacific region and within the African continent; support is therefore required for research activities.

33. Many European countries have carbon-related policies for the forest sector. According to *State of Europe's Forests 2007*, such policies are mostly focused on the promotion of bioenergy and less on carbon sequestration or the adaptation of forests to climate change. Twenty-one European countries have chosen to account for forest management under article 3.4 of the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.[18] Not all regions, however, can participate easily in forest projects under the Kyoto Protocol. In the case of the Pacific islands, the opportunities provided through the international trade in carbon credits or carbon offsets are poorly known and understood. Lack of information has led to skepticism among some forestry stakeholders regarding the benefits of different mechanisms. In response, clean development mechanism workshops have been organized to enhance the understanding of forestry agencies and institutions. Although Central American countries are aware of the opportunities related to conservation and forest management, accessibility has been limited for them. Apparently, there is not one forest-related project in the subregion that was implemented under the Kyoto Protocol scheme, despite the fact that some projects had been selected.[19]

34. Views on reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and sustainable forest management differ among regions. In 2008, the East Asia Forest Law Enforcement and Governance process tasked the ASEAN Experts Group on International Forest Policy Processes with developing REDD-related project proposals and to prepare an ASEAN input, including a sustainable forest management option for United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change-related discussions. The Asia Forest Partnership is also addressing the issue of reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation mainly through governance and efforts to combat illegal logging. Despite the attention given to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, the concept is laden with ambiguity. In this regard, some regional entities suggest developing a common understanding on issues related to the implementation of projects for reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation. Examining definitions and simplifying methodologies for estimating forest carbon stocks and greenhouse gas emissions, especially from forest degradation, have been mentioned as a means of achieving this common understanding. Mention has also been made of the need to address the issues of additionality, leakage, permanency, baseline and the governance structure of REDD so as to guarantee a clear and secure tenure arrangement. On the other hand, incentives to limit deforestation through schemes such as REDD have been deemed constructive by some regional entities. Secured financial resources would be expected to support endogenous capacity-building and

[18] FCCC/CP/1997/7/Add.1, decision 1/CP.3, annex.

[19] Examples of such projects, in Costa Rica and Nicaragua, have been provided by the Central America Commission on Environment.

institutional strengthening when REDD pilot projects or demonstration activities were being undertaken. Expectations for REDD are also high in respect of the inclusion of conservation and reforestation activities, which are beneficial for productive forests as well as for the financing of environmental services in protected areas.

35. According to the inputs, forests in all regions have suffered, to different extents, from severe storm damages, natural disasters and adverse climatic events. In addition, fires continue to be a major threat to forests. In Europe, policy instruments to address the issue of protection of forests from atmospheric pollution and fire had been developed starting in the 1990s. In 2003, the Forest Focus scheme for monitoring European forest ecosystems replaced such instruments. Other regions, however, still need to establish and/or strengthen networks for the management of transborder fires and other disaster prevention. CARICOM has been focusing on training and coordinated regional disaster response teams. Many regional entities expressed concern regarding future unknown scenarios, including the links among climate change, natural disasters, forest fires, pests and diseases, as well as impacts on forest genetic resources.

36. Through applied research and testing mechanisms, impacts on forests from climate change have been anticipated and better understood. One such mechanism is the International Model Forest Network, which has provided a series of transnational landscape-level sites dedicated to knowledge-generation and -sharing. The Circumboreal Initiative is a unique example. It provides collaborative opportunities for countries in the boreal biome to assist forest-dependent communities in assessing their climate change vulnerabilities and adaptive capacity, as well as to improve the sustainability of forest land-use and its biodiversity. Another such mechanism is the Carbon Budget Model[20] which predicts the amount of carbon stored in managed forests. Despite these and other technological advances, many regions are limited in their access to such research tools owing to high costs and training requirements. Moreover, the types of technology required for assessing and quantifying changes in carbon stock of forest stands managed under different management options, and for various forest types in different regions, still need to be identified and tested.

B. Reversing the loss of forest cover, preventing forest degradation in all types of forests and combating desertification, including in low forest cover countries

37. Across regions, there are shared concerns about continued deforestation and forest degradation. Adverse impacts on economies, on the environment, including biological diversity, and on the livelihoods of at least 1 billion people and their cultural heritage are pressing challenges resulting from persisting deforestation and unsustainable practices. Impacts of deforestation and forest degradation, climate change and the loss of biodiversity will have major — and, in some cases, devastating — social and economic consequences, especially for low forest cover countries and small island developing States.

[20] A joint project of the Canadian Model Forest Network and Natural Resources Canada-Canadian Forest Service.

38. Oftentimes, the causes of deforestation lie outside the forest sector and are associated with agricultural policies and practices that promote land-use change. Many of the rural poor rely on agriculture, livestock husbandry and harvesting of non-wood forestry products. In Africa, for instance, limited progress on irrigated agriculture, coupled with insufficient or lack of water, dictates the practice of extensive agriculture, leading to more deforestation and forest degradation. Overreliance on outdated and polluting technologies in factories, as well as in the transport and other sectors, also affects the forest sector. In the context of the Central America Commission on Environment, conservation-related policies and practices were recognized as factors promoting land-use change and contributing to greater poverty conditions, since such policies in some Central American countries prohibited the use of forests, in or outside protected areas, without providing alternatives.

39. Diverse views have been generated within and among regions on the demand for biofuels. The major concerns relate, for the most part, to how biofuels impact the livelihoods of local and indigenous communities and affect deforestation in natural forest areas.

40. Population growth and dependence of local people on forest resources have also caused uncontrolled deforestation and land degradation in several regions. Based on SADC input, the lack of clearly established landownership exposes forest resources to overexploitation and constrains investments. The enhancement of agricultural programmes set up to address food security has also led to greater clearing of forested land. Associated environmental impacts, such as lack of water, create additional challenges for reforestation. In light of this, SADC members are adapting and revising their forest policies, national programmes and strategies so as to better implement sustainable forest management. In this context, policies are also promoting participatory approaches, cost-benefit sharing mechanisms and alternative sources of energy.

41. Efforts to reduce deforestation and forest degradation have focused on preventing land degradation, rehabilitating degraded forest areas, preventing forest fires, combating illegal logging and establishing forest plantations. The 2002 Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution, the 2004 Strategic Alliance for Combating Illegal Logging and the 2007 Statement on Strengthening Forest Law Enforcement and Governance are examples of ASEAN achievements in this regard. The active joint participation of ASEAN in other regional and multilateral processes such as the East Asia Forest Law Enforcement and Governance initiative has also been instrumental in addressing these challenges. Other initiatives focusing on combating land degradation are the Green Wall for the Sahara programme, the decision on whose implementation was adopted at the Summit of African Heads of State and Government held in Addis Ababa in January 2007, the Plan of Action for Cooperation among the ECO Member States on Environment, and the New Partnership for Africa's Development/Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme and Environment Initiative. The African Union, ECA and the African Development Bank are also implementing a Land Policy Initiative to address the inequitable distribution of land, mismanagement of land resources and inconsistent legislation. The Framework and Guidelines on Land Policy in Africa are planned for adoption at the next Summit of African Union Heads of State and Government.

42. EU measures enacted to contribute to the prevention, mitigation and control of forest dieback so as to improve forest stability and forest restoration have been implemented in Europe. Of these, the Regulation on rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development is highly regarded. Reforestation projects carried out in Central America have yielded constructive results at the national level. In the near future, the subregion intends to promote a greater interchange of experiences within all Latin America. Nicaragua has already initiated an information exchange project with Chile that focuses on forest incentives and extensions. Through the Model Forests initiative, ecologically restorative projects in degraded forest areas to improve ecological processes have been implemented.

C. Forests and biodiversity conservation, including protected areas

43. The conservation of forest biodiversity was signalled as constituting an essential element of sustainable forest management. Almost all inputs highlighted the Convention on Biological Diversity and efforts to achieve the 2010 biodiversity target. In this context, in 2006, the European Commission produced a Communication setting out a detailed EU Biodiversity Action Plan including measures to fulfil the target. In 2003, through the Environment for Europe process, European ministers for the environment had endorsed the Kyiv Resolution on Biodiversity. Within the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe context, countries committed to coordinating the implementation of the Expanded Programme of Work on Forest Biological Diversity[21] and the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests proposals for action. The Framework for Cooperation between the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe and Environment for Europe/Pan European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy, and the approach of the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe to national forest programmes and the ecosystem approach, have been used to coordinate implementation. A MCPFE workshop on sustainable forest management to address aspects of the pan-European 2010 target will be organized in 2010.

44. A broad range of biodiversity-related international agreements are being implemented by EU and its members. Through the Natura 2000 scheme, EU intends to protect Europe's most valuable and threatened species and habitats. EU also plays an active role within the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species by regulating the trade in timber species most at risk. The ASEAN Vientiane Action Programme is also promoting cooperation on biodiversity-related measures within multilateral environmental agreements, including the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species and the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar Convention).[22] Besides having incorporated the Convention on Biological Diversity target, the Programme promotes coordinated management of ASEAN Heritage Parks. These Parks are of high conservation value, having preserved 27 sites to date, and perform an important role in meeting the Millennium

[21] Adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity at its sixth meeting (see UNEP/CBD/COP/6/20, annex I, decision VI/22, annex).

[22] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 996, No. 14583.

Development Goal of reducing biodiversity loss. The Programme of Work on Protected Areas, adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity at its seventh meeting,[23] has also been adopted by ASEAN. As regards the Economic Cooperation Organization, the Treaty of Izmir has set three main objectives which relate to energy resources, environmental protection and cooperation between the Economic Cooperation Organization and other regional and international organizations, as well as financial institutions. Pursuant to the third Ministerial Meeting on Environment, a meeting on biodiversity was held in 2007 at which the Economic Cooperation Organization reached consensus on its Work Plan on Biodiversity (2007-2015), for which Kazakhstan serves as coordinating country. A Task Force Meeting on Ecotourism was also convened in 2007.

45. Commitments to designate transboundary protected areas, production forests and sustainable land-use areas have been on the rise. In 2007, three ASEAN member States (Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia and Malaysia) signed the Heart of Borneo Declaration. Measures have been taken to minimize impacts of transboundary movement of living modified organisms, in accordance with ASEAN Guidelines on Risk Assessment of Agriculture-related Genetically Modified Organisms. Trans-frontier conservation areas are also being established by SADC member States to empower communities to conserve and sustainably use their natural resources. Significant conservation areas, such as national parks, biosphere reserves, World Heritage Forests, Ramsar sites and recreational parks, are also contained within or around model forests.

46. Actions taken to facilitate access to, and fair and equitable sharing of, benefits arising from biological and genetic resources were noted. A draft ASEAN Framework Agreement on Access to, and Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from, the Utilization of Biological and Genetic Resources is almost complete. While progress has been made in some regions, other regions and subregions still face poor benefit-sharing mechanisms, owing to a lack of the means to provide people in and around forests with adequate incentives for forest protection. In Central America, the proper incorporation of indigenous communities in protected-area management and their adequate participation in conservation projects and in the benefits arising from community forestry remain a major challenge. Regional and subregional inputs also emphasized the minor value attached to environmental products and services. Agricultural expansion, unsustainable forest management and bioenergy production have been viewed as significant threats to biodiversity conservation.

47. Despite large forest areas under formal protection, protected areas in many regions have been progressively linked with weak law enforcement and governance, limited operational measures, poor infrastructure and weak economic incentives for forest biodiversity conservation. About 70 per cent of protected areas in Central America do not have sufficient human and financial resources to effectively achieve their protective functions.[24]

48. Owing to continued forest loss, forest policies, legislation and plans in the Pacific region have undergone a significant shift, from an approach based on forest products and production to one applying more environmentally based concepts.

[23] See UNEP/CBD/COP/7/21, annex, decision VII/28, annex.

[24] Input of Central America Commission on Environment, 2008.

Provisions in many Pacific countries have encouraged national forest management plans to incorporate ecological and cultural management needs so as to address biodiversity conservation. In addition, better coordination and collaboration between sectors and more involvement in economic, social and environmental affairs are encouraged for the forest sector.

49. Various forest biodiversity projects at the regional level are supported by bilateral and multilateral cooperation organizations, including many members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests. Many projects are directed at institutional strengthening, development of conservation policies and management of protected areas. Monitoring of the trends in forest biodiversity and their interaction with sustainable forest management policies was recommended.

D. Means of implementation of sustainable forest management

50. As a contribution to the consideration of item 6 of the provisional agenda for the eighth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests, some regional entities participated in the meeting of the Forum's Open-ended Ad Hoc Expert Group to Develop Proposals for the Development of a Voluntary Global Financial Mechanism/Portfolio Approach/Forest Financing Framework, held in Vienna from 10 to 14 November 2008, providing views on a potential forest financial arrangement. Views on the means of implementation were also included in most inputs to the Forum's eighth session. In this regard, the weak reflection of forestry activities in national plans and accounts, the limited and difficult access to funding dedicated to Sustainable Forest Management within official development mechanisms, and the weak intraregional trade in forest products and services, as well as the lack of economic incentives for Sustainable Forest Management, were considered the most pressing issues. Many regional entities also recognized the significance of subregional Forest Law Enforcement and Governance processes, including trade and opportunities for Sustainable Forest Management through payment-for-forest ecosystem services schemes. The need to develop and carry out such schemes while bearing in mind local community livelihood priorities and benefits was considered important.

51. The issue of cutbacks in ODA and national government funding to the forest sector and their allocation to other sectors was a major concern. According to SADC, limited valuation of forest products and limited understanding of the contribution of forests to other sectors, as well as to gross domestic product (GDP), have led to an underestimation of the forest sector in national budgets. In many regions, the lack of financial resources allocated to the forest sector has resulted in a high dependency on conditional donor funding.[25]

52. In EU, the LIFE-Nature Programme contributes funds for restoration of forest areas designated as special conservation areas and the LIFE Environment Programme contributes funds for Sustainable Forest Management approaches.[26] While the management of forests in the agricultural context is financed through the EU rural development policy, the research and monitoring topics are under the Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development

[25] Input of the Southern African Development Community, 2008.

[26] Input of EU, 2008.

(2007-2013). The importance of ensuring sustainably managing forest resources so as to contribute to poverty eradication was also noted. To this end, the Thematic Programme on Environment and Natural Resources supports forest activities that influence national, regional and international policy developments and the implementation of EU Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) voluntary partnership agreements. Over 100 million euros of the Thematic Programme is expected to cover forest- and FLEGT-related projects for 2007-2010. However, major financial contributions from developed countries are still needed to support incentive schemes that tackle deforestation.[27]

53. Inputs also revealed a growing tendency to implement national initiatives with regional resources, jointly with international agencies and multilateral and bilateral donors, so as to promote forest management, rural development and economic growth. The multi-partnership mechanism TerrAfrica, with its support to countries in sub-Saharan Africa for mobilizing resources and scaling up coordinated investments in sustainable land management practices, constitutes a relevant example. Supporting the TerrAfrica principles, the Global Environment Facility in 2007 approved US$ 150 million for the Strategic Investment Programme for Sustainable Land Management. In the Pacific region, however, Sustainable Forest Management faces grave challenges in terms of achievement of sustained economic growth. Evidence from the 2007 assessment of progress on the implementation of codes of logging practice in several Pacific island countries and territories showed little positive change since the first assessment in 1999. While addressing these challenges, the secretariat of the Pacific Community has been providing members with support through technical assistance and training programmes at the subregional level and small grants to fund national and community initiatives.

54. Despite existing legislative frameworks, many regional inputs expressed concern regarding forest law enforcement. Lack of judicial support, limited capacities to implement forest law enforcement and governance initiatives, poor transparency and accountability, weak legislation and high costs in terms of infrastructure and human resources were mentioned as factors associated with deficient law enforcement. In some countries, the factor of overlapping jurisdictions between the central government, the district council (or local government) and traditional authorities was noted as being contributory to conflict in the management of forest resources. Delegating law enforcement authority to entities lacking the capacity to utilize it effectively was also a cause for concern.

55. The EU Forest Law Enforcement and Governance and Trade Action Plan, on the other hand, provided a positive scenario in terms of governance reforms, capacity-building, public procurement policies and private sector involvement. Moreover, in 2008, the first forest law enforcement and governance and trade voluntary partnership agreement was concluded with Ghana. Expressions of interest in FLEGT issues have come from several other African and East Asian countries.

56. New and emerging requirements for forests and forestry have called for improved technological skills and capacities. The European Forest Institute Forest Policy and Economics Education and Research capacity-building project, currently implemented in the western Balkan region, contributes to long-term governance and forest policy in countries with economies in transition. While there has been some

[27] Input of EU, 2008.

regional progress in technology transfer, with improved remote sensing, geographic information systems in forest management and monitoring, and the adoption of clean technologies, the high costs, limited access to information and lack of skills generally limit access to, and use of, technology in many other regions.

57. Cross-border law enforcement and efforts to curb illegal harvesting and trade in forest products were also mentioned. The Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization and the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe highlighted relevant studies addressing environmental and socio-economic impacts of illegal forest-related activities within their purview. Establishing links to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species was also noted. In this regard, the ASEAN Wildlife Enforcement Network and Regional Action Plan on Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora (2005-2010) provide interesting examples. Furthermore, a regional assessment on the development and implementation of national codes of practice for forest harvesting, conducted by partners in the Asia-Pacific region, served to strengthen the East Asia for law enforcement and governance process. Relevant in this regard are the activities of the International Tropical Timber Organization-Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species programme on timber species, which ensures that international trade in Convention-listed timber species is consistent with their sustainable management and conservation.

58. Despite the fact that the political will to pursue sustainable forest management does exist, there are major differences among regions and subregions. In Africa, inadequate gender mainstreaming in forestry and the shortage of trained forestry staff exacerbated by the HIV/AIDS pandemic are additional major challenges. Many entities expressed concern regarding the gap between forest policies and plans and their actual implementation. In this regard, better focus of available financial resources on integrated sustainable forest management implementation was encouraged.

III. Regional cooperation and partnerships

59. There is great potential for regional cooperation in helping to improve forest policy coordination, exchange information and develop joint approaches. Policy innovations provided by several partnerships, initiatives and networks have also helped to bring together and engage actors in an open and flexible manner. The cooperation between the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe and the Environment for Europe/UNEP/Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy, through the Work Programme on the Conservation and Enhancement of Biological and Landscape Biodiversity in Forest Ecosystems and their Framework of Cooperation, was noted as a positive example.

60. Further work needs, however, to focus on clarifying key elements and different values, as well as the specific contributions of Sustainable Forest Management in relation to challenges in other sectors and their demands related to forests. Attention was also drawn to improving awareness-raising and access to information on the links between climate change and forest issues, particularly within the Pacific countries and the African region.

61. The fact that a variety of international, regional and subregional entities, including major stakeholder groups, were working on similar issues at the regional

level, under diverse arrangements, was another important point raised in the context of communication and harmonization efforts. As each entity has its own mandate, as well as specific objectives, priorities and programmes, coordination is not always easily achieved. The appointment of regional focal points to facilitate coordination of inputs and to maintain regular communication with the Forum secretariat was considered constructive in this regard.

62. Information-sharing, education and awareness-building initiatives have, in many cases, helped to increase the profile of forests outside the forest sector. In this vein, the Regional Forestry Commissions introduced innovative regional approaches at their 2008 sessions. The African Forestry and Wildlife Commission and the Near East Forestry Commission, for example, held a first-ever joint session and the Asia-Pacific Forestry and the European Commission organized, in collaboration with partners, Asia-Pacific Forestry Week and European Forest Week, respectively. The Latin America and Caribbean Forestry Commission also addressed regional cooperation through subregional actions, including activities supported by the Puembo Initiative. Additional approaches were applied through the dynamic working groups of the North American Forestry Commission as well as the joint work undertaken by the European Forestry Commission and the ECE Timber Committee and their teams of specialists.

63. Multi-stakeholder dialogues and consultative processes, in many regional and subregional entities, have helped to ensure transparency and credibility. Working links have been established with non-governmental organizations, including the Nature Conservancy, TRAFFIC International, the World Resources Institute and WWF-World Wide Fund for Nature, among others, to support the implementation of thematic activities. A noteworthy instrument connected to the work of EU is the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matter (Aarhus Convention),[28] which ensures a participatory process in policymaking. Facilitating interaction between policymaking processes and the science community was also encouraged. In addition, joint activities and memorandums of understanding with member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and involvement with particular Governments on specific topics were highlighted.

64. Several entities organized meetings to prepare inputs to the session of the United Nations Forum on Forests, which involved government representatives, international and regional organizations and major groups. A relevant example is the SADC Stakeholder Forestry Forum meeting. The ASEAN secretariat compiled information and presented it to the Senior Officials on Forestry before submitting it to the Forum secretariat. ECA drew from consensus review reports and regional statements issued for the fourteenth and seventeenth sessions of the Commission on Sustainable Development. The review reports were enriched with inputs from the previous regional implementation meetings. Direct consultations were not undertaken in the cases, inter alia, of the Asia Forest Partnership, the Asia Forest Forum, the Caribbean Community, the Congo Basin Forest Partnership, the Central America Commission on Environment and the West African Economic and Monetary Union; instead, past reports and outcome documents were used in the preparation of inputs to the Forum's eighth session.

[28] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2161, No. 37770.

65. Recommendations were put forward to the Forum secretariat, including suggestions on how to strengthen closer cooperation with regional entities through harmonized reporting formats, and better use of the Forum website in light of regional activities, as well as resource mobilization for more effective regional reporting to the Forum.

Annex I

Regional and subregional entities providing inputs to the eighth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests

African Forest Forum

Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization

African Forestry and Wildlife Commission

Asia Forest Partnership

Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission

Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation

Association of Southeast Asian Nations

Caribbean Community

Central African Forests Commission

Central American Commission for Environment and Development

Community of Sahel-Saharan States

Congo Basin Forest Partnership

Economic Commission for Africa

Economic Commission for Europe/Timber Committee

Economic Cooperation Organization

European Forest Institute

European Forestry Commission

European Union

International Model Forest Network

Latin American and Caribbean Forestry Commission

Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe

Montréal Process

Near East Forestry Commission

North American Forestry Commission

Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy

Puembo Initiative

Secretariat of the Pacific Community

Southern African Development Community

West African Economic and Monetary Union

Annex II

United Nations Forum on Forests-accredited entities

2001: Center for International Forestry Research; International Tropical Timber Organization; Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe

2003: International Centre for Research in Agroforestry; secretariat of the Tehran Process for Low Forest Cover Countries; International Network for Bamboo and Rattan

2004: Association of Southeast Asian Nations

2005: Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization; Montréal Process

2006: Asia Forest Partnership; Central African Forests Commission; secretariat of the Pacific Community